



NEWS RELEASE

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Hispanics Face Increased Risks of Diabetes Complications

Diabetes EXPO Targets Hispanics and Other Ethnic Groups

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Hispanics with diabetes are at an increased risk for kidney and eye disease, amputations and other diabetes-related complications, according to a 2002 survey by the Utah Department of Health (UDOH).

The UDOH's 2002 Utah Hispanic Health Survey included 71 adult respondents with diabetes. Comparing findings from this survey with the statewide Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Utah Hispanics with diabetes were less likely to have had a dilated eye exam in the last year than non-Hispanics (60.1% vs. 70.1%) in Utah. They were also much less likely to have had a foot exam by a health care professional in the past year (47.4% vs. 71.8%). Strikingly, more than half of Hispanics with diabetes had never received a foot exam from a doctor, and nearly one in five had never received an eye exam.

"Routine eye and foot exams are essential to detecting diabetes complications before they cause blindness or amputations," said Brenda Bodily, Utah Diabetes Prevention and Control Program information specialist. "Because Hispanics have a higher risk of many diabetes complications, regular checkups and screenings are even more important."

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The survey also showed that Hispanics with diabetes were more likely to be affected by diabetic eye disease than non-Hispanics (25.2% vs. 18.6%) and are four to six times more likely to suffer from kidney disease.

Despite the lower numbers of routine foot and eye screenings, a large majority of Hispanics with diabetes seek routine medical services. Over the past 12 months, 84.9 percent of those surveyed reported receiving a routine doctor exam and 81.2 percent had a cholesterol test.

Health care professionals recommend exercise as an important way to control diabetes. Yet, Hispanics with diabetes reported exercising less often than Hispanics without diabetes (42.6% to 47.4%).

In an effort to educate Hispanics and others, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) is sponsoring its 2003 Diabetes EXPO on March 29, 2003 at the South Towne Expo Center in Sandy from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This is an opportunity to try the latest products, get updates on the latest diabetes research and treatments, ask questions one-on-one with diabetes professionals, get diabetes complication tests, watch cooking demos and more.

The EXPO will offer a diabetes education course in Spanish from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. In addition, the EXPO will feature a Kid Zone to educate and entertain children, and an Ethnic Pavilion featuring music and dance performances from Utah's Hispanic, Native American and Polynesian communities. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors and free for ADA members. Call 1-888-DIABETES for more information.

More diabetes information is available through local doctors and health care providers, or by calling the UDOH's Health Resource Line at 1-888-222-2542.

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